The Law not against the Promises of God.

A SERMON,

DELIVERED AT THE

ANNUAL ASSOCIATION

OF THE

BAPTIST MINISTERS and CHURCHES,

ASSEMBLED AT

LEICESTER,

MAY 30, 1787.

Published at the Request of the Ministers and others,

By JOHN RYLAND, junior.

Sold by J. BUCKLAND, Paternoster-Row, LONDON.

[Price 6d.]

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GALATIANS, iii. 21, 22.

Is the Law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a Law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

THE Unity of the divine Essence is not more certain and undeniable, than the perfect Consistency of the divine Character. As right reason assures us, that there can be but one infinite self-existent Being, who is the first cause and the last end of every other existence; so it would equally incline us to believe, that He who is absolutely perfect, must always maintain one uniform character: he must always act like himself. The discoveries he pleases to make of himself at sundry times and in divers manners, may differ widely in degree, but they never can be contradictory or really opposite. Cases may occur in the present state, wherein we who see but a part of God's plan, may not be able to discern the perfect consistency of his conduct; and our own inattention and bad taste may abundantly increase the difficulty: but a good man will rejoice in the thought, that when he comes to review the divine conduct in the world of perfect light, he shall find it all harmonious, and worthy of the Supreme Being.

Divine Revelation fully assures us of the same important truth. That the Lord *is in one mind*, † and

† Job, xxiii. 13.

changeth not. ‡ He is *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever:* § and with him there *is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* ¶ Consequently, Revelation itself must resemble it's Author, in the most perfect Consistency. Every part of God's Word must be *of a piece* with the rest. And every part of a divine Revelation must be of *Importance.* We may also justly expect that the more important any parts of that Revelation are, the more evidently will their agreement appear. So that if there should be found some seeming Contradictions in Scripture that are not easily to be cleared up, they must probably relate to affairs of less comparative Consequence; but the capital Branches of a Revelation that is truly from God, can by no means appear opposite to each other, if they are examined with Attention and Integrity.

Supposing then the divine Inspiration of the Scriptures, the proofs of which are numerous and conclusive, surely nothing can be of greater Importance, than a right understanding of the LAW of God, and of his glorious GOSPEL, which are both so largely treated of in the sacred Writings. Indeed the greatest Part of the Bible may be assorted under these two heads. A right understanding of these, (issuing in a cordial Conformity to the one, and a genuine Compliance with the other,) includes the whole of Religion. The Knowledge of the Law and Gospel must therefore be of the utmost Importance. And both having one Author, they must needs be consistent with each other.

But however harmonious the Law and the Gospel are in reality, it appears that some in the Apostle's days were ready to consider them as opposite to each other. They were jealous of the Gospel, as though it was inconsistent with the honour of the Law, and under that

Idea

‡ Mal. iii. 6. § Heb. xiii. 8. ¶ James, i. 17.

Idea opposed the Apostle, as one who *made void the Law through Faith*. But he rejects that Insinuation with Abhorrence, Rom. iii. 31.—And in like manner he here opposes the Suspicion, That the *Law* was *against the promises of God*.—Though yet, after all, there are too *many* to be found, even in the present day, who would really *frustrate the Grace of God*, under pretence of magnifying the Law; and *others* who would truly *make void the Law*, under colour of exalting divine Grace. These latter especially have often attempted to bring in Paul himself as their Patron and Abettor, but with how little ground the whole tenor of his writings will manifest.

It must, nevertheless, be acknowledged, that this Apostle, in different parts of his inspired writings, expresses himself in such a manner concerning the *Law*, as that a superficial Reader might be ready to conclude, that his *diminutive* Expressions in some places could hardly be made to accord with his most *respectful* Language in others. But more judicious Enquirers will be naturally led to examine, if he always uses the word *Law* in the same Sense; for, if the Term itself has not always the same meaning, we cannot wonder that, when used in different Senses, it should be treated in a different Manner.—It will be therefore needful, in order to a clear understanding of the Apostle's writings, as well as of other Scriptures relative to this important subject, carefully to enquire into the meaning of the term, to notice it's different acceptations, and then to examine into the drift and scope of the passage under consideration, that we may determine in what sense it is there used. To the same end it will be very useful to consider the Persons immediately addressed, and the apparent occasion of the respective Epistles. To each of these circumstances we will endeavour to pay attention

tion in the following diſcourſe, wherein I ſhall attempt, *Firſt*, To conſider the meaning and import of the Apoſtle's QUERY in the Text. *Is the Law againſt the Promiſes of God?* And, *Secondly*, attend more immediately to his own ANSWER to this Query, with the Reaſons annexed. *God forbid*, ſaith he, *for if there had been a Law given, which could have given Life, verily Righteouſneſs had been by the Law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under Sin, that the Promiſe by Faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.*

I. I begin with conſidering *The Meaning and Import of the Query* in the Text, *Is the Law then againſt the Promiſes of God?* To which End it will be needful to aſcertain *what Law* is here intended—to take a ſhort view of the *Promiſes* of God—and then to enquire, What *Occaſion* was there for ſo much as making it a queſtion, Is the Law againſt the Promiſes of God?

1. By *Law* is univerſally underſtood a *rule of Action*. And no one will raiſe a doubt but that *the Law* in the Text, intends the *divine* Law, or a Law given *by God*. In order, therefore, to our entering fully into the Import of the Text, we may profitably take a general ſurvey of the *conduct of God in the character of a Law-giver*, and conſider what Law or Laws he has ever given to Man.

That the Creator of all ſhould aſſume the reins of Government, and act the part of a Legiſlator, was not an arbitrary Step, but as eſſential to the good of the univerſe, as it was neceſſary for the diſplay of the divine Glory. We cannot rationally conceive of the all-perfect Creator, giving Exiſtence to intelligent creatures, and then leaving them to act without rule, as though they were independent of their Maker and accountable

countable to no Judge of their moral Conduct. An obligation to love the ſupreme Good, to depend on the firſt Cauſe, and to obey the Will of the ſupreme Governor, neceſſarily reſults from our firſt Ideas of God and a rational Creature. God's Knowledge and Love of himſelf, his conſciouſneſs of the relation and dependance of his creatures, his regard to their trueſt happineſs, require him to take the throne, and iſſue out ſuch laws, as are neceſſary to the preſervation of order and harmony in the univerſe. The *primary, original* LAW of God, upon which all his other Commands depend, is briefly, but clearly, ſtated by our bleſſed Lord in Matt. xxii. 37—40. It is there ſummed up in only two Precepts. The firſt requiring ſupreme Love to God, and the ſecond a moſt cordial good-will to our fellow-creatures. This is often, and very properly ſtiled the *Law of Nature*: As proceeding not barely from the ſovereign pleaſure of the Creator, but being founded in the very nature of things; or neceſſarily ariſing from the nature of God and his rational creatures, and that natural and unavoidable relation which ſubſiſts between them. A man muſt renounce his Reaſon, before he can conceive it poſſible for God, who knows himſelf to be infinitely good, to give exiſtence to a rational creature, and grant that creature *leave to hate him* with all his heart, or even to feel *indifferent* towards him. Nor can we rationally conceive of a number of reaſonable creatures being called into exiſtence, whoſe duty it ſhould be to *hate one another*, or to be void of all good-will to each other.

Under this Law, then, Man was originally created, and thereunto, in his State of Innocence, he was perfectly conformed. The Hiſtory of that ſtate is indeed very briefly related. Alas, it was a ſhort Period! Man being in honour continued not. But the ſcripture

aſſures

assures us he was formed in the *image of God*†. He was *made upright*. ‡ And these expressions, doubtless, indicate conformity to a rule of moral Conduct. The divine Image, at first, as well as at it's second Impression on human nature, consisted *in righteousness and true holiness*. §—We read, indeed, of no *written* or *verbal* Law being given him in his primitive state, except one *positive prohibition*, by which he was bound to abstain from the fruit of the forbidden tree. ‖ But that positive Command pre-supposed an original obligation to love and obedience. As it was his duty to love God above all, it must be his duty cheerfully to submit to the divine will, by conforming to that or any other positive Injunction. But Conformity to such precepts could not be a duty till God was pleased to reveal his sovereign will; as the most perfectly holy disposition could have given no information of duty in this case, previous to immediate Revelation. * Whereas a thoroughly right spirit must at once perceive our *moral* obligations without needing an express rule of direction. To a perfectly holy Creature, *moral* precepts

† Gen. i. 27, 31. ‡ Eccl. vii. 29. § Eph. iv. 24. ‖ Gen. ii. 17.

* The *moral* Law, being founded in the very nature of things, is eternal and unalterable. To suppose a creature exempt from such kind of obligation, is to suppose God to deny himself. But all *positive* precepts originating solely in the will of the supreme Governor, it involves no absurdity or contradiction to say, They might or might not have been instituted. God may issue forth such Commands, or repeal them at pleasure, may add to them, or diminish from them, without any inconsistency of character. e. g. *Sacrificing* was once a duty, it would now be will-worship and sinful. *Baptism* was once no duty, now it is the duty of all that bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

The difference between *moral* and *positive* precepts will receive an easy illustration, by comparing our duties to God, with those of a child to a parent. Every child is bound to love a good parent, independently of his parents expressly requiring his love. He is also bound, especially during his state of dependance, to

obey

cepts were needleſs. While the Law was fully written on the Heart, there was no occaſion to write it on tables of ſtone, or in the volume of a book. Innocent Man no more needed to be *told* to love his Maker, than to be charged to love his children, his wife, or himſelf. *The* written *Law*, (eſpecially in it's prohibitory form) *was not made for a righteous Man.* ‡ The Glory of his Creator ſhone all around him, and which way ſoever he turned himſelf, the profuſion of divine Bounty excited his Gratitude.—But the appointed Teſt of his obedience, though infinitely reaſonable, ariſing from the mere pleaſure of God, and not being founded in the nature of things, it was neceſſary that Man ſhould be expreſsly informed of it. As antecedent to the conſideration of God's poſitive Precept, no reaſon could be given for his abſtaining from that one tree, any more than from any other.

We have not time now largely to conſider, or vindicate, that divine Conſtitution by which Adam was appointed the federal Head of all his Poſterity. The Character of it's Author proves this Conſtitution to have been juſt and equitable. In it's own nature it was even advantageous, as might be proved, were it not deviating too far from our preſent ſubject. None of us ſhould have offered a complaint againſt it, had it not been for the unhappy failure of our firſt Parent, who

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obey his Father's reaſonable Commands. It would never excuſe a Child's hatred of a good Father, if he could ſay with truth, "My Father *never told* me to love him." But every body is aware that it would be a ſufficient excuſe for the omiſſion of many particular actions, for a Child to be able to ſay, "My Father never commanded them." While yet theſe ſame Actions would have been the Child's Duty in caſe of the Father's Command; and diſobedience, when once the Father's will was made known, would have indicated the defect of the Child's Love, and have been juſtly puniſhable.

‡ 1 Tim. i. 9.

ungratefully tranſgreſſed the Will of his Maker, by eating the forbidden fruit, and thus ruined himſelf, and his poſterity. The loſs of Advantage by the *Covenant of Works*, through the fault of our diſobedient Progenitor, by no means alters the real equity of that Appointment, whereby he was conſtituted our legal Repreſentative. The terms of the Covenant were holy, fair and kind. And the Authority of God to appoint one perfectly holy Creature to act in the room of others, who were naturally connected with him, cannot well be denied, without denying the propriety of appointing the ſecond Adam, to ſuſtain a ſimilar Character in the *Covenant of Grace*. For, in this Reſpect, the firſt Adam was *a figure of him who was to come*. †

Let it ſuffice that we here obſerve, reſpecting the *Covenant of Works*, that; having been once violated, it is in vain for Man to expect any advantage from that quarter. It promiſed Life only upon the Condition of *perfect Obedience*. A Sinner, therefore, can have no claim upon it for any Good. Being once broken, we can never repair the breach. Fallen, apoſtate Creatures are no longer in Covenant with God; nor have they of right any thing more to do with the *Law* in it's *Covenant Form*, except only to acknowledge their forfeiture of the Bleſſing it promiſed to the Obedient, and their righteous expoſure to it's awful Curſe. The Law of God never encouraged a *Sinner* to expect Life from his own hands. It pronounces the Man *accurſed that continues not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them*. If a Sinner would hear what the Law ſays, he muſt believe himſelf under the Curſe, and acknowledge that his juſt wages is eternal Death. What ſome have called a *legal Bias*, therefore, in fallen Men, whereby they expect eternal happineſs on the footing of their

† Rom. v. 14.

their own doings, ought not to be conſidered as the remaining effect of an original Bent given to their Minds by their Creator. It is an *illegal claim* to which neither the Law, nor the Law-giver, ever gave any countenance. It is Pride and Preſumption, of which God can no more be the Author, than of any other Sin. If the Sinner believed the Law, he would account it illegal and preſumptuous to entertain any hope of acceptance with God upon the footing of imperfect Obedience. The Law itſelf utterly diſcourages and condemns a ſelf-righteous ſpirit in a ſinner.*

Meanwhile, our *falling under* an Obligation to Puniſhment, can by no means releaſe us from an Obligation to Obedience. And a gracious *releaſe* from the former, would be ſtill farther from releaſing us from the latter. The Law of God, conſidered as a *Rule of Action*, muſt remain in force for ever. God will never abdicate his throne in favour of rebels: And his friends will never wiſh the reins of Government out of his hands. None can *fall below* this eternal, original ſtandard of Rectitude, ſo as not to be any longer obliged to love God ſupremely, becauſe they are now ſo wicked that they have no heart to comply with it's demands. Nor can any *riſe above* it, ſo as either to be exempt from an obligation to love God, becauſe of their ex-

 alted

* To be dead to the Law *as a Covenant*, is in this Senſe, every Sinner's duty. That is to ſay, it is his duty to own the righteouſneſs of his own condemnation. And it would be to his advantage, as news of relief from another quarter cannot be welcomed aright, till his illegal, ſelf-righteous hopes are ſlain. But it is a common caſe for ſuch to be *ſinfully alive* to the Law in this view, who are yet *ſinfully dead* as to all real, internal conformity to it.—While, on the contrary, true Believers, *through* an acquaintance and acquieſcence with the ſpirituality, extent, and righteous ſtrictneſs of *the Law*, become *dead to the Law* as a Covenant, *that* they may *live unto God*, in real conformity to it as a rule of Life. *Being not without Law unto God, but under the Law to Chriſt.* Gal. ii. 19. 1 Cor. ix. 21.

alted privileges; or to be able to surpass it's utmost extent, by giving God more than all the Heart, or performing any duties that do not radically spring from an inward conformity to the spirit of this Law.

The Apostle observes, Rom. v. 13, 14. that *sin was in the world* before the Law was given at Sinai, *but as sin is not imputed where there is no Law*, and yet the *reign of death from* the time of *Adam to Moses*, proves it was imputed then; so it clearly follows that all through that period, Men were considered as under some Law, which was evidently no other than that *Law of Nature*, or *moral Law*, of which we have been already speaking, whereby God requires to be loved with all the Heart, and that we should love our neighbours as ourselves. While God continues infinitely lovely, every rational Being must be under an obligation to treat him accordingly. The obligation remains immutably upon Angels, Men and Devils. If the Enmity of the latter is become so great that they *cannot abide* him, they are so much the more wicked, and so much the more inexcusable. The Law makes no Allowance on account of our disinclination, be it ever so predominant. When God demands the heart, even the whole heart, and the whole *strength*, he is *not* to be understood as making our *Inclination*, but our *natural Capacity, the measure of our Obligation*. He does not barely intend that we should love him *as much as we have a mind*, but that we should love him as much as we can possibly love any object whatever, and far above every other object of our love.—And as to our fellow-creatures, we are bound to bear toward them the sincerest good-will, and to desire their highest happiness, even as we do our own. Nor can we lawfully cease to love them, till we are assured, by the Event, that they are irreconcileable enemies to God and Goodness.

Then

Then, indeed, Love to God, to Virtue and the Universe, will require that we love them no more.

Be it, then, ever remembered, that the *Law* of God *is spiritual*, however carnal we may be. It extends not merely to the outward Actions, but mainly to the Heart; to the very springs of action; taking notice of our motives and ends, and requiring them to be pure and holy. Ps. li. 6. Zech. vii. 5, 6. This law is *universal*, extending to all rational Creatures. It is eternal and immutable. Too good to be repealed or altered.—Whatever *positive precepts* God has enjoined upon any in the various periods of time, they derived their force from this primary obligation to Love and Obedience.—Either additional favours, or peculiar privileges, or new manifestations of the divine Glory, may call out our Love into new modes of action, but still the supreme Love, which the Law originally required, will be the radical source of every right affection or exertion, even in the blessed Inhabitants of Heaven itself.

It is time, however, I should proceed to observe, that the Term LAW has, in many parts of Scripture, a different Acceptation, as referring not to the *Law of Nature*, but to the *Covenant* which God entered into with the People of *Israel* at *Mount Sinai*. In this latter sense it is frequently used, especially in this Epistle, and in that to the Hebrews. It will be therefore highly expedient briefly to consider the nature of the SINAI COVENANT, as it will enable us to account the better for the Apostle's having occasion to propose the Query in the text, and also for his speaking so differently concerning the *Law* in one sense of the word, to what he does in the other.

When Jehovah brought the people of Israel out of

Egypt,

Egypt, he entered into Covenant with them at Mount Sinai, in which Covenant the whole nation were included, even all the natural deſcendants of Jacob. He aſſumed the Character of the King of Iſrael, and condeſcended to become their political Head. He engaged to grant unto them a long and proſperous enjoyment of the Land of Canaan, which he had promiſed to their fathers, upon condition of their punctual obſervance of the Laws and Ordinances which he enjoined upon them. The obedience required, included not only an external conformity to the *moral Law*, delivered chiefly in a prohibitory form, in ten commandments, but alſo the obſervance of a great number of *ceremonial* inſtitutions, which were deſigned to preſerve them from the Idolatry of neighbouring nations, and were partly multiplied to puniſh their idolatrous worſhip of the golden Calf, as it is obſerved in ver. 19. *The Law was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions.* ‡

Were it not for the ſinful blindneſs of the carnal mind, the tranſactions at Sinai, and the inſtitutions there appointed, were well calculated to convince of ſin, and alſo to prefigure the great Salvation. When the

‡ May not this expreſſion, and that in Rom. v. 20. *The Law entered that the Offence might abound*, indicate alſo the tendency of multiplied precepts to diſcover the depravity of the heart. Men are generally ſtrangers to their own hearts, and unwilling to believe they are ſo bad as the Scripture intimates. Might not God deal by them, therefore, as a Parent may be ſuppoſed to deal with an undutiful Child, who yet denied his bad diſpoſition, and was ready to plead that he loved his Father well enough, and knew not why he ſhould harbour ſo ill an opinion of him. "Let me try him, then, ſays the Father; I will order him to do a number of eaſy things, which I have a full right to enjoin, and you will ſee what a diſobedient Creature he is. Even though I promiſe ſuch rewards as he could not claim, and that will more than recompenſe his labour, yet he will be negligent and diſobedient." So it was with the Jews, notwithſtanding the temporal bleſſings graciouſly connected with their obedience to the moſaic Law.

the divine Majeſty was diſplayed in the promulgation of the Law, uttered with an audible voice from the midſt of flaming fire, it might well fill the camp with awe, and cauſe *Moſes* himſelf *exceedingly to fear and quake*. The prohibiting form of that Law ſtrongly indicated that it was given to Sinners, whoſe depraved Hearts were perverſely diſpoſed to the contrary evils. The tenth commandment, "Thou ſhalt not covet," ſeems particularly deſigned to point out the ſpirituality of all the reſt. However external obedience might entitle the Jews, upon the footing of the national covenant, to a proſperous enjoyment of the earthly Canaan; they who, like David, not only regarded the letter, but entered into the ſpirit of the Law, would learn from it, that if God ſhould *enter into Judgment* with them, upon the footing of perſonal Obedience, *no fleſh could be juſtified in* his *ſight*. Pſ. cxxx. 3. and cxliii. 2.—And the laſt of the *twelve* awful Curſes, to which all the People, upon their entrance into the land of Canaan, were ſolemnly bound to ſay *Amen*, (Deut xxvii. 26.) was ſuited, in an eſpecial manner, to drive the Sinner to ſelf-deſpair.

Jehovah, as *King of Iſrael*, required of every Jew, exact *external* obedience to the whole Law given on Sinai, both as to it's moral and poſitive requirements; or elſe the forfeiture of the promiſed Land, and death itſelf could only be avoided by an atoning Sacrifice, even the offering of ſome living Creature in the Offender's ſtead, according to God's own appointments. And ſo Jehovah, as *King of the Univerſe*, requires of every rational creature, perfect *internal* as well as external obedience to his whole revealed will; or elſe a forfeiture of eternal life, and the poſitive ſuffering of eternal death, can only be avoided, by a Sacrifice of God's own appointment, even the Lamb of God, that

taketh

taketh away the Sin of the World. — *Almoſt all things were, by the Law, purged with Blood; and without ſhedding of Blood is no remiſſion.* But the Apoſtle, in the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, eſpecially in the ixth. Chapt. moſt fully teaches us, that the principal deſign of the Jewiſh Prieſthood, and their various Sacrifices, was to typify the Prieſthood and Sacrifice of Chriſt. Their Ablutions and Offerings for ſin, while they ſtrongly intimated the polluted, guilty State of the People, were appointed types of the bleſſings of Meſſiah's

* The *national Covenant* with Iſrael, though attended with a Republication of the moral Law in ten Commandments, is to be diſtinguiſhed, on the one Hand, from that law, as previouſly binding on all Mankind. And, on the other hand, though it was attended with a *diſpenſation of Grace*, (which, however, did not extend to all who were under the national Covenant, and did extend to ſome who were not under that Covenant:) it is repreſented in Scripture as very diſtinct from the Covenant of Grace, which God had revealed to Abraham 430 years before, ver. 17. It afforded many emblems of the bleſſings of Grace, and was deſigned to be preparatory to the coming of the Meſſiah, and the more full diſplay of his glorious Salvation under the New Teſtament Diſpenſation. But the Covenant at Sinai was made with all the ſeed of Iſrael, the majority of whom, in every age, appear to have been deſtitute of real religion. Thereby carnal Men were admitted to peculiar privileges, upon the footing of carnal qualifications. Merely to be deſcended from Jacob, and circumciſed in the fleſh, entitled to the enjoyment of the Privileges of that Covenant, upon the obſervance of it's external rites. The very higheſt Offices in the Jewiſh Church, the Prieſthood itſelf included, were claimed upon the ground of a carnal deſcent, without any regard to the inward piety of the Candidate. It ſecured only temporal bleſſings; it contained no promiſes of ſpecial grace or eternal glory. Both were enjoyed by many who lived under that diſpenſation, but not upon the footing of the national Covenant. The Claim of Believers, in that period, to ſpiritual and eternal Bleſſings, was not founded on their Obedience to the Law of Moſes, but upon the gracious promiſe which God had long before made to the fathers, and which that Law was never deſigned to diſannul. — They who yielded external Obedience to the Sinai Covenant, had a claim, upon that condition, to the enjoyment of the promiſed Land, and

were

Meſſiah's Kingdom. *They were a ſhadow of good things to come, but the body*, the ſubſtance, *is of Chriſt.* Col. ii. 17. Even the providential dealings of God, with the ſeed of Abraham after the fleſh, may be juſtly conſidered as in many reſpects typical of his gracious dealings with his elect People, whom he hath redeemed from ſpiritual bondage, and whom he gives a better inheritance than an earthly Canaan.

The continual repetition of the Sacrifices, and their being appointed only in ſome caſes, and not in others, Numb. xv. 27, 30. was a deſigned intimation of their inefficacy, as to making a real, proper Atonement for Sin. No ſacrifices were provided either for heart Sins on the one hand, or preſumptuous ſins on the other. They *could not*, therefore, *make him that did the ſervice perfect, as pertaining to the conſcience*, Heb. ix. 9. *For the Law made nothing perfect, but was the introduction*

were allowed to urge that plea, Deut. xxvi. 12—15. But eternal Bleſſedneſs is only obtained through Chriſt's obedience unto Death, by whom all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes. Acts xiii. 39.—And as this Covenant might be kept by graceleſs Men on the one hand, ſo, on the other, the Righteouſneſs of this Covenant might be loſt, and Covenant Relation diſſolved. Ezek. xviii. 24—26. Which can never be pretended poſſible reſpecting thoſe truly intereſted in the Covenant of Grace.—I add, the Moſaic Law was deſigned only for a time. Heb. ix. 10. and calculated only for the obſervance of one nation. As ſeveral of its precepts could not poſſibly have been adopted by all the world, nor even by the inhabitants of a very large Empire. Deut. xvi. 16.—It was a wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and is now removed by our bleſſed Saviour. Eph. ii. 14.

But I would refer the reader, who wiſhes more fully to inveſtigate this ſubject, which is of great importance to a clear underſtanding of a conſiderable part of the divine word, to *Dr. John Erſkine's Diſſertation on the Nature of the Sinai Covenant*, which is the firſt in his *Theological Diſſertations*, printed for Dilly, in London, and contains the cleareſt and fulleſt view of the ſubject I ever met with.

of a better hope; by the which we draw nigh unto God, Heb. vii. 19. *through the once offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt*, as a *ſacrifice for ſin*, whereby he hath *obtained eternal redemption*. Heb. x. 10. ix. 12. But tho' many among the Jews were divinely enlightened, to ſee through the vail of the types, and have reſpect unto that *Mediator*, whoſe *death* ſhould procure *the redemption of the tranſgreſſions that were under the firſt teſtament*, (Heb. ix. 15) yet the body of the people of Iſrael, having the veil of unbelief upon their hearts, looked no farther than the outward Inſtitutions, and had no ſenſe of the Spirituality of the moral Law, or the ultimate deſign of the ceremonial, which, rightly underſtood, would have been a ſchoolmaſter to bring them to Chriſt.—The ſame carnal ſelf-righteous temper working in the Apoſtle's days, rendered it needful to propoſe the queſtion in the text, *Is the Law againſt* the promiſes of God, as we ſhall preſently ſhew more particularly.

2. But let us next attend to *a brief repreſentation of the promiſes of God*.—The omniſcient God, unto whom were known, from eternity, all the events of time, was not ſurpriſed or diſappointed by the entrance of evil into our world. His plan was ready laid to get himſelf glory, by occaſion of what naturally tended to his greateſt diſhonour. He meant to *glorify himſelf in the higheſt*, by making *peace upon earth*, and by diſcovering his free *good-will towards men*, after the whole human race had taken up arms againſt him. But never ſhould his Love to Sinners be ſo conſtrued, as to imply an approbation of Sin; ſince he would neither relax the reins of goverment, nor ſuffer his Law to be inſulted with impunity. A Mediator was provided before-hand, who ſhould repair the breach made by ſin, in a way infinitely

finitely honourable to God and to his holy Law. For this end, the eternal Son of God was deſtined to become incarnate, and in the Book of the divine decrees it was written, that he ſhould make his ſoul an offering for Sin. Cheerfully he united in the glorious deſign, "Lo I come to do thy Will, O my God, thy Law is within my Heart." Nor was his ſucceſs left to hazard and uncertainty; an elect people were abſolutely given him by Covenant, and *eternal life promiſed* them *in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began.** Yes, it was fixed by an irrevocable decree, that he ſhould *ſee of the travail of his ſoul and be ſatisfied*; and, having perfected his work by Obedience unto Death, bring an innumerable multitude to Glory, who were predeſtinated to the Adoption of Sons, and to be redeemed unto God by his Blood.—This Myſtery of redeeming Love, hid in the boſom of God from Eternity, was firſt obſcurely diſcovered, to the grateful Surprize of our guilty Parents, and the grievous Aſtoniſhment of their ſubtil Tempter, at the time of their Examination, in the very day of their firſt Tranſgreſſion. *The ſeed of the Woman ſhall break the Serpent's head.*† Sacrifices were then appointed and accepted. And, by Faith, Abel offered a more acceptable Sacrifice than Cain, acknowledging, by the death of the firſtlings of his flock, that he was a ſinner worthy of death, while he truſted that God would provide for himſelf a Lamb whoſe blood ſhould cleanſe from all ſin.—To Abraham it was revealed, that the Meſſiah ſhould deſcend from Iſaac, and in him ſhould *all the families of the earth be bleſſed.* Jacob, on his death, foretold him, under the title of Shiloh, and adored him as the Angel that redeemed him from all evil—Moſes propheſied of him as a Prophet, whom God ſhould raiſe up like unto him, to whom all ought

* Titus i. 2. † Gen. iii. 15.

to hearken, and whoever would not give ear unto him ſhould be deſtroyed from among the people. Acts iii. 22, 23. Deut. xviii. 15, 19. But, though Moſes was, in divers reſpects, a type of Chriſt, and Chriſt was, in various reſpects, like unto him, Jeſus hath, in all things, the pre-eminence. See Heb. iii. 3--6. The *moral* Law, as given by Moſes, appeared as the Miniſtration of Condemnation; true, it was glorious and becoming it's Author, but it exhibited no *grace*; alone it afforded no hope to a Sinner. The *ceremonial* Law, indeed, exhibited a Shadow of good things to come, but none of it's ſacrifices were ſufficient to make the comers thereunto perfect; it was not poſſible for the blood of bulls or goats to take away ſins. Heb. x. 1--4. But the blood of Chriſt hath done that truly, which they could only do typically. Accordingly, to him all the Prophets bore witneſs with increaſing clearneſs and fullneſs, till the appointed time came, when he appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf. And, when he was manifeſt in the fleſh, Zacharias teſtified that God had *viſited and redeemed his people, and raiſed up an horn of ſalvation, in the houſe of his ſervant David; as he had ſpoken by the mouth of his holy prophets.* Then was performed the chief *mercy promiſed to the fathers*; *the* gracious *covenant* was fulfilled, which he had confirmed by *oath* unto *Abraham*; *to give the knowledge of ſalvation unto his people by the remiſſion of their ſins.* Luke i. 68--79. By his obedience unto death, *all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which* they *could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes*, Acts xiii. 39. And now have *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, been encouraged to *truſt in his Name*, being aſſured that he is *able to ſave unto the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him*; and that *all the promiſes of God are yea and Amen in him, unto the Glory of God by us.*

3. But

3. But after the preceding repreſentation of the *Law* and the *Promiſes*, it ſeems not unnatural for the reader to aſk, *What room was there ſo much as to query, Is the Law againſt the Promiſes of God?* Seeing it already appears, that Jeſus, by his Obedience unto Death, hath magnified the *original Law* of God, and made it honourable; and through him God is juſt, and yet the juſtifier of the ungodly;—Seeing, alſo, that the *Jewiſh Law* manifeſtly implied it's own imperfection, and was principally deſigned to prefigure his redemption? To this I anſwer, Though the Law of Moſes was never deſigned by it's Author to contradict his own gracious promiſes, but rather to ſubſerve his deſigns of mercy, in rendering their neceſſity more apparent, and their punctual fulfillment more evident; yet multitudes of the Jews never entered into the views of the Lawgiver in this reſpect, but thought to obtain final acceptance with God, upon condition of their own obedience.—When the Types were ſuperceded by the appearance of the Antitype, there were indeed many true Converts to Chriſtianity, who entirely depended on the Redeemer for Salvation, who yet, for a time, wanted light into the Abolition of the Moſaic Ritual. Of theſe James ſpoke to Paul, Acts xxi. 20. "Thou ſeeſt, Brother, how many thouſands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the Law." Toward theſe the Apoſtle ſhewed great gentleneſs, even as their Lord and Maſter had ſhewn unto themſelves. They were well aware of the power of prejudice, and the proneneſs of Mankind to be inordinately attached to old Cuſtoms, even when they wanted the Sanction of a divine Command, on which *theſe* Ceremonies were undoubtedly founded, though they had now ceaſed to be binding upon that footing. They alſo knew that divine Providence would ſoon put it out of their power to keep up this

this Conformity to the Ceremonies, by the deſtruction of the temple and the city of Jeruſalem. They therefore waited patiently, expecting to ſee thoſe good Men gradually weaned from their prejudices.

But when ſome of the Jewiſh Converts, not content with continuing to practice the ancient rites themſelves, were for enforcing the ceremonial Law upon the Gentiles who embraced Chriſtianity, the Apoſtles united in publiſhing a decree in favour of the latter (Acts xv.) And Paul freely encouraged them to ſtand faſt in the Liberty wherewith Chriſt had made them free.

The *judaizing Teachers*, who infeſted the Churches of *Galatia*, went farther ſtill. They inſiſted upon the Obſervance of the Ceremonial Law, *as neceſſary to Juſtification before God.* But whether this Sentiment included an attention to *moral* duties or not, the Apoſtle conſidered it as a direct oppoſition to the Goſpel of Chriſt. He inſiſted upon it, that thoſe who were circumcized upon *this* principle, had virtually renounced the doctrine of Grace, and accordingly forewarns them that Chriſt would profit them nothing. In vain did they pretend to depend in part upon his obedience unto death, while they united therewith any kind of works of their own, as the ground of their acceptance with God. *Chriſt is become of none effect unto you, whoſoever of you are* expecting to be *juſtified by the Law, ye are fallen from Grace*, v. 4.—But ſince they pleaded a regard for the Law, as the ground of their oppoſition to the real Goſpel of Chriſt, as publiſhed by the Apoſtle, this gave occaſion to his propoſing the Query in the Text, to which he himſelf returns ſo full and explicit an anſwer.

I may add here, that if any of theſe Phariſaical Profeſſors conſidered the *ceremonial* Law, as ſuperceding the obligations of the *moral* Law, which was the caſe with

with ſome in the days of Chriſt, (Matt. xxiii. 23.) and in the time of the Prophet Iſaiah (Iſaiah i. 11--17. lvii. 1--6.) this was an additional Error of the moſt pernicious tendency.—Though even this awful miſtake was exceeded by the doctrine of *ſome* among the Jews, who, ſoon after, if not at this time, fell into the abſurd and impious notion, that the Law of Moſes was given, not with a deſign to oblige them to univerſal obedience, but that they might have opportunity of obtaining eternal Life, by chooſing out ſome one of it's precepts, which, if they kept with the moſt ſcrupulous exactneſs, though they neglected the reſt, it would be ſufficient to entitle them to an eternal Reward.*

Such errors as theſe the Apoſtle uniformly and ſtrenuouſly oppoſed; and when Peter himſelf had tacitly given countenance, by his practice, to thoſe who would have impoſed the yoke of the abrogated ceremonies on the Gentiles, he *withſtood him to the face*; being jealous, eſpecially, leſt his conduct ſhould be made an handle of, to the diſadvantage of that capital truth of Chriſtianity, the doctrine of a ſinner's juſtification by the faith of Chriſt, and not by the works of the Law.—But yet he moſt cautiouſly guards, in the text, againſt any diſhonourable views of the Law itſelf, as though it were, in it's own nature, inconſiſtent with the promiſes of God.

It will, from what has been obſerved, be eaſy to account for the different manner in which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the *Law* in different places. Of the original, unalterable Law of God, he always ſpeaks in terms of the higheſt reſpect. Of that Law, I mean, which his argument, in Rom. v. 13. implies exiſted before Moſes, even from the Creation; though all mankind are juſtly condemned

* See Robinſon's Tranſlation of Saurin's Sermons, Vol. iv. Page 12.

condemned to death for the breach of it; and though, as to the purpose of entitling us to eternal life, it is become *weak through the flesh*. Instead of giving life to a Sinner, it reveals the wrath and righteous displeasure of God against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of Men. But this is no fault of the Law, to bear witness against the fault of the Creature. As it never demanded more for God than his due, so it never threatened the Sinner with any thing worse than his desert.—Of the temporary Institutions of the Mosaic Dispensation, considered as now abrogated by the death of Christ, and especially as abused by the Judaizing Teachers, who set them up in opposition to the Gospel of Christ; not considering that Œconomy, as preparatory to Christianity, or designed to shew them their need of the promised Messiah, and lead them by Types and Shadows to Faith in him: of these ceremonies, I say, thus abused, he speaks in this Epistle in very diminutive terms. He calls them *weak and beggarly Elements, whereunto* they *desired again to be in bondage*, iv. 9.—But how differently does he speak of the *moral Law*, in Rom. vii. 12, 22. *The Law is holy: and the Commandment holy, just, and good. The Law is spiritual. I consent unto the Law that it is good. I delight in the Law of God after the inward Man.* And well he might, for his blessed Lord and Saviour did so. Ps. xl. 8. And so do all his Saints. Isai. li. 7.—So again, though he exhorts the Galatians (v. 1.) to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and not be entangled again with the yoke of* ceremonial *bondage*. Yet, in the same Chapter (14) He recommends the *second* and *lowest* branch of the *moral Law*, as *fulfilled in one word, in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. And, in Ch. vi. 2. he enjoins them *to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ*. Now, surely, if

Christ

Christ has confirmed our obligations to fulfil the *second* great branch of the Law, he has not released us from our obligations to be conformed to the *first* and *greatest* Command. Hardly can I forbear adding, he must be more like a *Devil* than a *Christian*, who could reckon it a privilege to be released from so blessed an obligation.

II. But it is time to proceed to the *second* Thing proposed, The Consideration of the *Apostle's* Answer to this *Query*; and more immediately attend to the Evidence, that the *Law is not inconsistent with the Gospel*, or against the promises of God.—I would only premise, that I shall consider both the Question and Answer in the text, in the most extensive sense, as including both the Law of Creation, and the Law of Moses. I suppose, indeed, that the latter is more generally intended by the word Law, as used in this Epistle and in that to the Hebrews; but here I think both are included. Especially for these two Reasons. (1.) The Mosaic Dispensation was attended with a promulgation of the *moral Law*, in the ten Commandments; which, though employed under that Dispensation for a particular purpose, as constituting a part of the national Covenant, yet did not thereby lose any part of it's original authority. I conceive that God did not require *spiritual* obedience of the Israelites by the *national* Covenant *as such*. But by entering into a new and peculiar Relation to them, as their political Head, he did not give up his prior Relation as the God and Governor of the Universe, and in that Character he as much required *the Heart* of *them* as of any other People upon earth. (2.) The Apostle seems particularly to design being as universal as possible in his answer, and therefore, in the original, drops the article, and observes, that *if there had been Law* (i. e. any

Law) *that could have given Life, verily Righteouſneſs ſhould have been by Law.* And as Dr. *Guyſe* obſerves, according to Mr. *Locke's* rule of interpretation, νομος and εν νομῳ being here uſed without the article, they relate to *Law in general*, and conſequently exclude from our juſtification, the works not only of the *ceremonial* and *moral* law both, but alſo equally oppoſe the unſcriptural idea of our being juſtified by our own Obedience to any *ſuppoſed new, remedial Law.*

Theſe things being premiſed, we would attend to the proof, that the law is in no ſenſe contrary to the goſpel, or againſt the promiſes of God. In the firſt place we ſee the Apoſtle, with a tone of abhorrence, flatly denies the ſuppoſition. *God forbid! Let it by no means be!* Nor does this ſuffice; he not only denies, but diſproves. *If*, ſays he, *there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the Law*, &c. Intimating that the Goſpel was deſigned for a purpoſe, to which the law was wholly inſufficient, and which it really never propoſed to anſwer, *viz.* to give Life to a Sinner. Though yet that end is *ſo* anſwered by the Goſpel, as not to offer the leaſt injury to the Law, or caſt any reflection upon it, for not doing what it never undertook to perform.—And then, laſtly, he points out the real ſubſerviency of the Law to the Goſpel in ver. 22. *As concluding all under ſin*, that ſalvation might appear to be wholly of grace.

The Apoſtle utterly rejects the Idea of any real oppoſition between Law and Goſpel. And well he might. For that Idea, once admitted, muſt reflect diſhonour upon God himſelf, in one Character or another. Either his Law muſt have been too ſtrict, or his Goſpel too lax. He at firſt demanded more than his due, or he now has given up his juſt rights. But ſhall we dare to conceive of God as acting the part of a cruel Tyrant,

or

or as sinking into the likeness of a weak and too indulgent Parent, who sacrifices his authority to the humours and vices of his Children? Shall we suppose the Almighty at first laid an inconsistent plan of Government, which he has been obliged to correct and amend, as conscious it was too rigid and severe? Or shall we imagine, that his Love to his People has induced him to save them at the Expence of Law and Justice, and to the dishonour of his own Crown and Dignity? God forbid, says the Apostle, and let every loyal Subject, let every filial heart say Amen.

We have considered the term *Law*, as here including both the *moral* and *ceremonial* Law. Whether these are considered conjointly or separately, we shall find them in perfect harmony with the gospel.

Let us *first* view them *conjointly*, and here we will notice the grand argument of the apostle in the text, from the consideration of the insufficiency of the Law to give Life. The Gospel discovers a glorious method to accomplish a gracious design, which design could not have been obtained by the law, whether ceremonial or moral. Could the *Justification of a Sinner* have been effected by the law, it might then have taken just offence at the Gospel, as intruding into it's concerns, and invading it's peculiar province. Could the Law have alledged against the introduction of the Gospel, that the sinner might have attained a title to eternal life by *precepts* as well as by *promises*, and that, therefore, the bestowment of the latter was unnecessary, we might on that supposition admit a variance between them. But this never was the case. *The Law is weak through the flesh*, and cannot justify an individual of the fallen race. It can therefore make no just objection to the work being done by another hand. If any objection were made, the gospel has at once this for an-

ſwer. *If there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the Law. But the ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin.* If, therefore, men had not been juſtified by the Goſpel, they could not have been juſtified at all. But the Law in itſelf has no ſuch objections to make. It was only it's indiſcreet advocates, or rather it's pretended friends, that entertained any ſuch ſuſpicions. The Law itſelf in no form is againſt the Promiſes. On the contrary, it cheerfully gives place to the Redeemer, and finds itſelf fulfilled in him and magnified by him.

If it had been poſſible for the *moral* Law to have accepted a Sinner, upon the footing of perſonal but imperfect obedience; or if the additional obſervance of the *ceremonial* Inſtitutions enjoined by Moſes, could have made amends for moral defects; could it have been proved conſiſtent with the divine Purity and Immutability, to have altered and lowered the original demands of the Law of Creation; or could it have been agreeable to the divine rectitude and dignity to have ſet the old Law aſide, and to have ſubſtituted another, whereby it would have been poſſible for a ſinner to have been reconciled unto God, either upon eaſier or harder terms, than the perfect obedience which he at firſt required: if, I ſay, either of theſe had been poſſible; then, verily, righteouſneſs ſhould have been thus attained. God would have ſpared his only begotten Son. He would not have ſhed his blood without occaſion. For ſurely if the Death of Chriſt was not abſolutely neceſſary to ſecure the honour of the divine Government in the Pardon of Sin, it will be for ever impoſſible to ſee either Juſtice, Wiſdom or Love in that awful event. Had it been *poſſible* for the *Blood of Bulls or Goats* to have taken away ſin as well as the Blood of *God's own Son*, undoubtedly ſo great a Sacrifice would never have been appointed.

But

But no Law was given, nor could have been given, that could give the Sinner Life. The *moral* Law demanded our *all* for God, and it was *naturally impoſſible* we ſhould give him *more* than our all.—A *ſtricter* Law could have done us no good. Repentance was already required, though not by the *letter* of the Law, yet by the *ſpirit* of it. For it muſt have followed from Love to God, if any true Love had remained after we had once offended him. But this could not avail for our Juſtification, unleſs repentance could be proved to be either the *complete Righteouſneſs* of the Law, or the *whole Curſe* of the Law.—A *milder* Law would have been infinitely diſhonourable to God, as it would have left it implied that he had before been chargeable with tyranny, in exacting more than his due, or threatening the Sinner with more than he deſerved. It would have implied that Sin was not ſuch a mighty evil as the *old Law* had ſuppoſed, and that God had guarded his Law by a Sanction which it would have been cruel to have put into execution. Beſides, the *moral Law* was, and ſtill is, level with our *natural* capacity, and if it muſt be levelled with our *moral* capacity, i. e. with our inclinations, how low muſt it ſink then! Alas, it muſt have been brought ſo low as to require nothing but external obedience, without any real aim at the divine Glory; and then it would ſtill have been ten thouſand to one but we had failed, even in that outward performance of Duty which a bad man might poſſibly have performed. But ſurely it muſt have tended to God's diſhonour to have promiſed eternal Life as the reward of obedience ſo radically and eſſentially defective. The fact was, the moral Law never could give *eternal Life* but upon the condition of *perfect* obedience. But upon that footing it was too late for a *Sinner* ever to expect it, the Law having been already tranſgreſſed by his diſobedience,

diſobedience, and he being expoſed to it's juſt but awful penalty.

As to the *ceremonial* Law, that was never calculated to give eternal Life, except only as directing to the Lamb of God who taketh away the ſin of the world.—It would be offering the greateſt Injury to the divine character to ſuppoſe the bleſſed God who had originally required perfect Obedience, and internal Conformity to his holy Will, would now be ſatisfied with mere outward Ceremonies in it's ſtead. Or that he who had threatened rational creatures with eternal Death in caſe of their Diſobedience, would accept of ſo trivial a commutation as the momentary ſufferings and death of a mere brute. How far muſt this have been from any tendency to convince his ſubjects of the rectitude of his original requirements, or the heinous malignity of tranſgreſſion. Thoſe judaizing Teachers who attempted to propagate ſuch a ſentiment as this, abuſed the ceremonial Law in oppoſition to the moral Law, as well as in oppoſition to the bleſſed Goſpel, which it was it's chief honour to pre-figure.—I may add, neither the *moral* nor *ceremonial* Law provided *ſpiritual* Life for a Sinner. They contained no promiſes of divine Influence effectually to incline to obedience. Even the former, when Man was in Innocence, did not enſure the preſervation of his ſpiritual Life, or the continuance of that holy diſpoſition of which he was then poſſeſſed. And if the Law could not preſerve Life, much leſs could it communicate it to one dead in Sin.

If we view the *ceremonial Law diſtinctly*, we ſhall find that however abuſed by it's ignorant partizans, it was never really oppoſite in itſelf to the Promiſes of God, but in various reſpects ſubſervient to them. The true Syſtem of Judaiſm was preparatory and not contradictory to Chriſtianity. The whole Moſaic Econo-

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my tended to prove the need of the Gospel Method of Salvation, by the Sacrifice of the eternal Son of God. And it contained a great number of typical Institutions; which, though they could not make the Attendants upon them perfect, prefigured a better hope. *Almost all things by the Law were purged with blood*, to shew that *without shedding of blood there is no remission. It was therefore necessary, that the patterns of things in the heavens, should be purified with these* ceremonial purifications, *but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.* Could the legal sacrifices have made a valid atonement, they would have ceased being offered, instead of being repeated year after year; but though it was not possible for the blood of brutes to take away sin effectually and eternally, they were lively types of that *one offering* of the blood of Jesus, whereby he *hath perfected for ever them that were sanctified.* Heb. ix. 22, 23. x. 2, 3, 14. In fact, "almost every "part of the ceremonial law, besides it's other pur- "poses, was intended to typify either the Messiah, or "the Characters of the Subjects of his kingdom, or "the blessings of the Christian dispensation." Viewed, therefore, in its original design, it was not at all against the promises of God. For there can no more be an opposition between the type and the antitype, than the prophecy can be against it's own fulfilment. It was the highest Glory of these Shadows to be turned, as it were, into Substance, by the Appearance of God our Saviour. But when the Sun of Righteousness was fully risen, the Light of the Moon was withdrawn. The Mosaic Œconomy gave place to a more spiritual dispensation, under which none are to be accounted in covenant with God on the footing of birth, blood, or mere outward conformity to any positive institution. But *he* only *is a Jew who is one inwardly*, &c. And

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the bleſſings belonging to ſuch, are infinitely preferable to any which the ſeed of Jacob, according to the fleſh, could claim upon the ground of the Sinai Covenant, being ſpiritual, inamiſſible and eternal.

If we view the *moral* Law diſtinctly, there can be no contradiction between that and the Goſpel, becauſe the latter gives to the former it's utmoſt claims, and effectually provides for it's being honoured and obeyed. The moral Law was fully eſtabliſhed, yea, magnified and made honourable, by the perfect and glorious obedience of the Son of God, who *came not to deſtroy the Law, but to fulfil it.* The deliverance of Believers from the Penalty of the Law, is in a way infinitely honourable to the Law, ſo as to prove the Equity even of the *penal ſanction*, by ſhewing that God had only threatened the ſinner with his real due; and that, in ſo doing, he had done as he would be done by; ſeeing he ſpared his own Son, when he became Surety for Sinners, no more than he would have ſpared the Criminals themſelves. And thus the Believer's Title to eternal Life, reflects honour upon the Law, being given as the reward of perfect Obedience to it's holy Precepts, even the Obedience of the Son of God in human Nature, who cheerfully complied with it's utmoſt requirements, and made it his meat and his drink to fulfil all it's Commands. This glorious Obedience is at once the *Matter of our Juſtification*, and the *Pattern of our Sanctification.* So that the Apoſtle, in the very ſame Chapter (Rom. iii.) where he had ſo ſtrenuouſly pleaded, *That a Man is juſtified by Faith without the deeds of the Law*, might well ſay, *Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we eſtabliſh the Law.*

The Goſpel Method of Salvation is every way to the Law's Advantage. What human Law would object to a Prince

a Prince becoming Surety for a Beggar, when, without this Substitution, all the satisfaction the Law could have had, would have been to shut up a miserable penniless Culprit in prison for life. The only difficulties were, to find a Surety of sufficient Worth and Ability; and of sufficient Goodness and Grace; who yet should be near enough of kin to them to whom the Law had been given, and by whom it had been broken; and who also should be properly authorized to act as the Sinner's Surety. But infinite Wisdom has found such a Ransomer. He is able, he is willing, he is rich enough and kind enough; he is near enough related to us, and he is properly authorized. And the Law has not a Word to offer by Way of Objection. [I hope, poor Sinner, you have none.] *His Obedience* hath brought unspeakably more honour to the Law, than our's could have done. God never had such a Servant beside. He boasts of him, he delights in him, he delights to honour and reward him. He calls on Heaven and Earth to look at him: "Behold mine Elect Servant, in whom my Soul delighteth; and see by the Reward of his Obedience, how much I delight in Righteousness."—So also *his Sufferings* are a far stronger Testimony of God's hatred of Sin than our's would have been, had we suffered the Vengeance of eternal Fire.

The Law then is not against the Promises, nor are the Promises against the Law. The Gospel is against the Sinner's Justification by the *works* of the Law: But why? Because the Law itself is against it. It would be altogether inconsistent with the immutable Perfection of the Law, and so infinitely to the dishonour of the Legislator. But are the promises against the Law? God forbid. The *whole Law is summed up in one word*, "Love." And can the Gospel of Christ be opposite to the Duty of *Love*? Surely Jesus, by

his Obedience unto Death, has confirmed all the Obligations to Love which we were under antecedent to the Conſideration of his Death: and he has ſuperadded other obligations of infinite weight, addreſſed to our Gratitude.—View the Law, as divided by our Lord into *two* principal *Branches*, and which of theſe does the Goſpel ſet aſide? Does it caſhier *Love to* GOD? The Jews, who ſaid our Lord caſt out Devils by Beelzebub, did not utter a viler ſlander, than the Man who would repreſent Believers in Jeſus as freed from Obligation to love God with all the Heart.—Does it exempt from *Love to* MAN? Surely, not. It has even laid us under an infinite Obligation to love our very Enemies, from the Conſideration of the Son of God's dying for us, even under the Character of his Enemies.—View it as repreſented in the *ten Commandments*, and which of thoſe prohibitions does the Goſpel ſet aſide? Does it countenance Idolatry, Will-Worſhip, Profanation of God's Name, or of his Day? Does the Goſpel teach diſobedience and neglect of relative Duties? Read the cloſe of Paul's Epiſtles and ſee. Does it encourage cruelty, impurity, injuſtice, ſlander, or covetouſneſs? Does it repreſent theſe as *leſs ſinful in Believers than in others?* It's open Enemies would be aſhamed to bring ſuch a charge againſt it. If there ever was a pretended friend who has encouraged ſuch an idea, he has acted the part of Judas over again. But *the Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching* ſuch that cordially embrace it, *that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live* SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, *and* GODLY *in this preſent World.* Yes, theſe are *the things that become ſound Doctrine. Our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* Tit. ii. 1, 11,

11, 12, 14.—He that hath delivered his People from the Curse of the broken Covenant of Works, by being made a Curse for them, Gal. iii. 13. hath confirmed, instead of relaxing their Obligations to devote themselves to the Lord.—View the Law as expanded and unfolded in *all the preceptive part of the word of God*,* and every part is sweetly enforced by the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Believers are taught, *whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, to do all to the Glory of God.* And this under the influence of the most powerful of all motives: *Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.* 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

Moreover, the Gospel of Jesus does not merely present us with motives to Obedience, it *makes effectual provision for the Law being obeyed.* It not only exhibits a *Saviour*, whose cordial conformity to all it's precepts, has put more honour upon it than the obedience of all the Angels in heaven; but it reveals a *Sanctifier* to write it's commands upon the hearts of elect Sinners. The Law, though it claims the heart, cannot change it. It is but a mere Rule of what is right, without any Efficacy necessarily connected with it. The Gospel, on the contrary, makes effectual provision for the bestowment of the Holy Spirit, to conform us to the will and image of God.

* How unaccountable and unwarrantable must the conduct of any be, who should pretend to confine the meaning of the term *moral Law* to the bare limits of the Decalogue, and then go about to prove that the Law is not a sufficient Rule for the Conduct of Believers. Will such Persons represent the *Gospel* as a *new Law*? Or will they say the Word of God is a Rule of Practice as well as Faith to believers; but *not* as containing *any Law* to which they ought to be conformed. Certainly a Man ought not to be made an offender for a *Word*, but it will be very difficult for one who discovers and encourages an Antipathy to the Name of the *Law*, to keep up a prope respect for the Thing.

Thus then, it is abundantly evident, that the Law is not against the Promises. For *if the Law could have given Life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law.* Let us, therefore, never forget the *Reason* why a Sinner cannot be justified by his own Obedience to the moral Law. It is not owing to any thing wrong or defective in it's Precepts. Nor to any undue rigour or severity in it's penal Sanction. It never demanded more of the Creature, nor threatened any thing worse to the Sinner, than what a good, holy and righteous God knew to be perfectly just and right. The reason why we ought not to look to the Law for Justification, is *not* because God disapproves of his own Law, and undervalues a real conformity to it; but because we are destitute of that conformity, and the Law cannot justify it's *Violators*. God has no design to alter or lay aside his original rule of Government, as if it was mean and contemptible, or cruel and tyrannical. Heaven forbid the Blasphemy! Shall we suppose that the two great Commandments, on which hang all the Law and the Prophets, are now discarded, and that neither God nor we have any thing more to do with them? By no means. The Standard of Righteousness is eternal and immutable. But the Law, considered in the form of a Covenant, curses and condemns the Sinner, who cannot escape but by fleeing to the refuge set before him in the Gospel. By that means, indeed, the Believer is for ever freed from Condemnation. Yet not at the Expence of the Law. *Grace reigns through Righteousness* (not on the Ruins of it) *unto eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Rom. v. 21. He is the end of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth. His Obedience was a fuller demonstration of the equity and immutable Goodness of the Law, than the Obedience of all mere Creatures united. And his Sufferings were a more striking demonstration

monſtration of the infinite evil of Sin, than if all the Sinners in the World had been caſt into the Lake of Fire. God originally promiſed to reward Obedience to his Law, not becauſe any Creature could, ſtrictly ſpeaking, merit by doing his *Duty*, but becauſe the great Governor of the World delighted to ſhew his Love to Obedience. And now he will have a ſtill better Opportunity of teſtifying his well-pleaſedneſs with true Righteouſneſs, by making millions of redeemed Sinners fellow-heirs with his incarnate Son of that vaſt reward by which he hath recompenſed his Obedience unto Death. For all the Happineſs of the Saints in Glory, is to be conſidered as the Reward of perfect Obedience to the Law of God; not indeed of their own perſonal Obedience, but the Obedience of their bleſſed Surety. How is it poſſible for God himſelf to put more honour upon the Law, than by giving the everlaſting poſſeſſion of Heaven, as a reward to that Obedience which above every thing elſe hath magnified the Law and made it honourable.

And here let me remark how impoſſible it is for any man really to admire *Chriſt's Righteouſneſs*, and to account it worthy of ſuch an immenſe reward, when yet he ſees no beauty or excellence in *Righteouſneſs in general*. Surely if we admire *Chriſt's* Righteouſneſs ſincerely, we muſt eſteem Righteouſneſs *univerſally*; and if we approve of Righteouſneſs univerſally, we muſt long to be righteous *perſonally* and *inherently*. Every one, therefore, who truly embraces Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, muſt love Holineſs, and ſo love the Law as a Rule of Life, though he is dead to it as a Covenant. For indeed, all the Holineſs of Saints here or hereafter, is nothing more than real conformity to the ſpirit of the Law; or nothing more than the natural reſult of ſupreme Love to God, which is required by the firſt and greateſt Commandment of the Law. Thus

Thus have we seen that though the moral Law cannot give Life to a Sinner, this is owing to the fault of the Sinner, not to the fault of the Law. It is owing to the Law's Goodneſs and abſolute Perfection, and to the Sinner's badneſs and criminality, that he cannot be juſtified by his own obedience. The Law could not entitle us to Life in that it was *weak through the fleſh*, Rom. viii 3. It could not adjudge thoſe to eternal Life upon the ground of their own obedience, whoſe obedience was not fully commenſurate with it's righteous demands; and much leſs thoſe whoſe every action was radically deficient, and wholly deſtitute of the eſſential Nature of true Virtue, which is the caſe of all the unregenerate.

The foregoing obſervations are farther confirmed by verſe 18th, wherein the apoſtle ſeems to meet the objection which ſome might bring againſt him, who would ſay, "Why then was the Law re-publiſhed ſince the fall, or given in writing to ſinners, when it was impoſſible for them to be juſtified by it?" *The Scripture*, replies the apoſtle, *hath concluded all under Sin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.* Thus the Law, when rightly improved, is not in anywiſe againſt the promiſes, but is employed in the ſacred writings altogether in ſubſerviency to the Goſpel. The whole tenor of *Scripture hath concluded all under ſin.* Whoever underſtands the prohibitions and requirements of the moral Law, in their extent and ſpirituality, muſt acknowledge the ſinfulneſs of all mankind, who are ſo far from any real conformity to it's demands. While the ſeverity of it's penalties, as annexed by him whoſe judgment is according to truth, diſcovers ſin to be infinitely culpable. The *curſe* being denounced againſt *Every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of the Law to do them*, excludes

cludes a ſinner from all hope of acceptance with God upon the ground of his own obedience.—The *Ceremonial* Law, by it's various Purifications and Sacrifices, bore farther witneſs to our Pollution and Guilt. And thus they coincide with the humbling import of the Croſs of Chriſt, which manifeſtly implies that we had done *deeds worthy of death*, that we were *infinitely to blame*, and utterly *unable* ourſelves to *make amends* for our Violation of the Law. Hence it was that we needed a Saviour and a Great One. And hence that Saviour, with all his infinite Dignity and all his Intereſt with the Father, could neither hope nor wiſh to ſucceed in his Mediation and Interceſſion, but upon the ground of a Sacrifice of infinite value, which he has offered up unto God in our ſtead.

By this means everlaſting ſhame is thrown upon Sin, everlaſting honour put upon the Law, while everlaſting happineſs is ſecured to the believing Sinner, and everlaſting Glory and Triumph crown the Redeemer. Thus Salvation appears altogether a free Gift, the fruit of ſovereign, unmerited Love. Grace ſhines and reigns triumphantly in all our Salvation. The promiſes are all yea and amen in Chriſt Jeſus. The ſureſt ground of encouragement is given to every believing ſinner. All ſpiritual and eternal Bleſſings are communicated through the Mediator, to thoſe who are conſcious they could have claimed nothing but deſtruction on the ground of perſonal obedience. All Boaſting is for ever excluded; and at the ſame time no room is left for the indulgence of Sin under the covert of the reign of Grace. The Croſs of Chriſt, while it diſcovers the only expiation of Guilt, manifeſting the evil of ſin more fully than even the flames of hell. While Jeſus delivers our ſouls from deſtruction, he ſweetly and effectually conſtrains us to ſeek the deſtruction of ſin: and indeed

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communicates that life and strength which the Law never pretended to bestow.

But the length of the previous discourse requires me to conclude with only adding a few *Observations* by way of *Improvement*.

Obs. 1. We may learn from the text, and the remarks already made thereon, that *it is no way inconsistent with the most* EVANGELICAL *Designs, for the Ministers of the Gospel fully to explain the Law, and carefully to vindicate it's Honour*. On the contrary, it is their *Duty to preach the Law, though ever in subserviency to the Gospel of Christ*.

It is the holy *Law* of God which is the eternal and immutable *Standard of Duty* by which we must judge of right and wrong. Though the blessed God may superadd what positive precepts he pleases, yet it is upon this original footing, that they become obligatory on the Consciences of those to whom they are directed. By the *Law* also *is the Knowledge of Sin*. Paul acknowledges he *had not known sin but by the Law*. How can a Minister hope to convince his hearers of sin, but by stating and asserting the requirements of the Law? Or how can conviction of sin be any otherwise than very partial and defective, if the Law is not opened in it's full extent and spirituality, as reaching to the heart, as well as the outward conduct; and making no sort of allowance on account of our utter depravity, or *moral inability* to obey it? As we cannot know the greatness of our unworthiness and guilt, till we know the Law to be SPIRITUAL, *holy, just* and GOOD; so we cannot know our *Need of Christ* without such an acquaintance therewith. But the more we see the Extent, Equity and Excellence of the Law, the more we shall see of the need of his Blood and Righteousness, in

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order to our Pardon and Acceptance with God.—— Again, A real ſenſe of the Excellence of the moral Law, is abſolutely neceſſary to any true ſenſe of *Chriſt's own Excellence*. The Goodneſs of *his* Temper and Conduct, the worth and value of *his* moral Character and Obedience, cannot be ſeen by any man who is blind to the Beauty of that Law to which he was perfectly conformed, and which he delighted to magnify and make honourable.—— Farther, No Chriſtian can know *for what end he needs the Agency of the* HOLY SPIRIT, but in conſequence of his Acquaintance with the Law of God. It is His Work to *write the Law upon the heart*; but if we know nothing of the contents of that Law, what ſhall we aſk him to do? We have no other rule to detect *that* which we ſhould pray him to *mortify*, nor to diſcover what manner of ſpirit we ſhould aſk him to *produce* and cheriſh in us, but this holy Law. For all the preceptive part of ſcripture is nothing elſe but our Lord's two Commands expanded. Though various duties are required of Mankind, according to their different circumſtances, in conſequence of the *fall* and *recovery*, which were not required of Adam in *Innocence*; yet they all are the natural reſult of the ſame principle of *ſupreme Love* to God, varying it's operations according to the change of our circumſtances. Though not contained in the *letter* of the Law as given to Adam, or publiſhed on Mount Sinai, they are contained, as I may ſay, in the *ſpirit* of it.— Finally, Chriſtians cannot judge of their *frame and temper of mind* toward God and Man, ſo as to know whether they are growing in Grace, or not, without a careful and frequent examination of themſelves by this invariable Standard of Duty.

This Specimen of the uſefulneſs of Miniſters preaching the Law, in ſubſerviency to evangelical purpoſes,

may ſuffice to anſwer ſome ignorant profeſſors (though wiſe enough in their own eyes) who would revile ſuch Preachers who think it their Duty to explain the moral Law, and inſiſt upon it's ſpirituality and excellence, as if theſe were the very kind of teachers that Paul oppoſed in this Epiſtle. But let the intelligent Reader judge, if his ſpeaking diminutively of the Sinai Covenant, then abrogated and abuſed, can be fairly improved to degrade the original Law of God, or condemn Goſpel Miniſters for making uſe of it in their Preaching.—*Paul*, indeed, tells the *Galatians* (iv. 10, 11.) *Ye obſerve days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, leſt I have beſtowed upon you labour in vain.* But is *this* the ſame thing, as if he had ſaid, "I am afraid of you, becauſe you talk ſo much about the "extent of human obligation, and the purity of the "original Law of God. You conſider it as the duty "of all men to love God, and one another; and re"preſent their not being able to find it in their hearts, "to comply with this demand, as their ſin, inſtead of "an excuſe. You go about to convince men of ſin, "by comparing their hearts and lives with the Law, "in hope that *through* the Law they may become dead "to the Law, and ſee their need of Chriſt: and when "they have believed in Chriſt, you teach them to ſhew "their Faith by their Works, &c. Surely I have be"ſtowed upon you labour in vain."—Let ſuch a Complaint as this be compared with the Apoſtle's own Practice, and the tenor of his Epiſtles, and then think how conſiſtent it would ſound with his own Language in Rom. iii. vii. Titus iii. 8. and an hundred paſſages beſides.

We allow, indeed, that the *moral Law* may be abuſed both by Miniſters and hearers. *We know*, ſaid the Apoſtle, *that the Law is good, if a Man uſe it lawfully.* 1 Tim.

1 Tim. i. 8. A Preacher may dwell dispassionately and injudiciously upon the most important Truths, and when such is the Case, even though they should say nothing but the truth, they are to be blamed for neglecting other Truths. And too many have set up for *teachers of the Law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.* Such have either avowedly or by implication represented the old, original Law as repealed or lowered in it's demands, and have encouraged *sinners* to expect acceptance with God upon the footing of their own Obedience. This is an *illegal abuse* of the Law, contrary to it's own explicit declaration, *Cursed is the Man that continueth not in all things.*

As the moral Law, though still obligatory, may be abused, so the *ceremonial Law*, though now abrogated, not only had it's use, while it continued in force, but the history and Explanation of it may still be very useful to Christians, though they are under no obligation to conform to it's *carnal ordinances*, which were only *imposed* on the natural seed of Israel *until the time of reformation.* Heb. ix. 10.

Obs. 2. I would once more remark, that it follows from what has been said, That *the most deeply convicted Sinner, has no need to fear the Law will oppose his Salvation, if he is but cordially willing to be saved by Grace through the Lord Jesus.*

It is true, the very Nature of true Faith implies an hearty Approbation of the Law, and a cordial Acquiescence in the humbling Import and holy Tendency of the Gospel, as suited to discountenance Sin to the uttermost, and glorify God in the highest. There is indeed a *way* of preaching what some *call* Gospel, in direct opposition to the Law, so as to leave the very Core of the Controversy between God and the Sinner untouched, or rather to leave the Sinner justified in all his former

Heart-Rebellion, and all his present Imperfection. And there are a Sort of Believers, that, without any true Regeneration, may gladly embrace such a Gospel as this. The Law of God upon this plan, if not expressly criminated, is at least given up, and allowed, by sad implication, to have been as unjust as the law of Pharoah; but the Sinner being taught to be confident of his Pardon, like the favourite of a bad Magistrate, cares not whether the Law was right or wrong, provided he is safe. He has no notion that it would have been just for *himself* to have suffered, but if his Surety or his fellow criminals had hard usage, what is that to him? He is content, for the sake of honouring his Patron, to cry up his Clemency; and the Execution of a bad Law upon others gives him no uneasiness, so long as *his* safety is secured. But it is not so with the real Convert. The Faith of the true Believer could not have been the natural Produce of a carnal Heart at Enmity with God. It is of God's own Operation: and thereby a Sinner who dares not plead the least Worthiness of his own, but is conscious of infinite Ill-desert, is yet emboldened to return unto God in the Name of Jesus, making mention of his Righteousness, even of His only. Though the *Law*, even as a *Ministration of Death*, appears *glorious*, (or else for Christ to fall a Sacrifice to it's Honour must shock every friend to Righteousness in the Universe) yet the blessed Gospel, *the Ministration of Righteousness exceeds* the Law *in Glory*. Therefore is the Believer charmed to see Justice and Mercy met together in him, and all the Attributes of God reconciled to his Salvation, yea, and glorified in it, much more than they could have been in his destruction. No good End could have been answered by the Sinner's death, which could not be equally, yea, more abundantly secured by the Saviour's

death; while other valuable ends are answered by the Salvation of the believing Sinner, which could not have been answered by his Destruction. What gracious Encouragement must arise from this consideration to accept the Invitations of the blessed Redeemer.

Obs. 3. Hence I remark, lastly, That *all true Believers must delight in the Law of God after the inward Man*; and while they disclaim all hope of acceptance by it as a Covenant of Works, and rejoice in deliverance from it's Curse, they ought ever to consider it as the *Rule of Life*, and study universal Conformity to it, from a principle of Gratitude to their Redeemer.

This thought has been just mentioned before, but it may be proper a little to confirm the Observation. It is indeed much to be lamented that there should be the least occasion to prove to any professing a regard for evangelical truth, that the Law of God is still obligatory on Believers as a Rule of Conduct. But, alas, what conceit is too extravagant and abominable to find some patron even in the professing world?—While some have considered the *unregenerate* as *sunk below the Law*, so as that it can require nothing truly good of them, because they are wholly bad; as if the wicked, obstinate Will of the Creature were the measure of his Duty, and God must therefore never require any thing of a Sinner which he was sure he could not find in his heart to perform:—others have represented the *Believer* as *raised above Obligation*, by his being delivered from Condemnation; as if the Saviour could not sustain the Characters of a Priest and a King both at once; or at least as if nothing could be the Believer's duty but what he was actually inclined to perform.

That you may ever dread to entertain so unscriptural and pernicious an error, let me beseech you to consider the

the Conſequences of denying the Believer to be under the moral Law as a rule of Life.—If Believers are in no ſenſe under the Law, it will follow, that they are incapable of ſinning after their Converſion, for all ſin is a *Tranſgreſſion of the Law*. *But where there is no Law there is no Tranſgreſſion*.—We muſt ſuppoſe, then, that there is no King in Zion, but every man that is a believer, may do what is right in his own eyes, having no other rule of right or wrong but his own Inclination.—If Chriſtians are under no Law, they can have no reaſon to mourn over the *plague of their own hearts*, (if by that phraſe is intended any thing odious to God) unleſs Conſcience, which ſuch profeſſors will probably call Unbelief, ſhould ſometimes plague them, by interrupting their preſumptuous Confidence.—All the repentance and grief for ſin againſt God, ſuppoſed to be committed after converſion, which Believers felt while they were young and tender-hearted, was needleſs and uſeleſs; and is what they ſhould guard againſt in future, after they come to know their Liberty as being freed in every ſenſe from the Law. For upon this principle it muſt be ſuppoſed, that they do nothing after they have believed which they need to be ſorry for, on account of its ſinfulneſs. If they have any cauſe of grief it can only be upon a *mere ſelfiſh* principle, as regretting they were not ſo happy as they might have been.—It muſt alſo follow, that after being once converted, we no more need the Spirit of God to convince us of Sin, or to mortify the deeds of the Body;—nor do we need to live upon Chriſt for Strength, for where there is no Law, there can be no tranſgreſſion, and conſequently no Duty. If, therefore, we have nothing to do, we have ſtrength enough already to do it.—Yet, as Believers are too evidently capable of falling into the ſame pernicious Actions after they have believed as before, it muſt ac-

cording

cording to this Notion, follow, that what would have been ſin in another, is no ſin in a Believer.—Yea, that a man after he has believed in Chriſt, may repeat the very worſt action he ever committed before his Converſion, and not have any cauſe to be ſorry for it, or aſhamed of it, as ſin againſt God.—This further Conſequence is alſo unavoidable, That Chriſt by his Death only made Atonement for the ſins that his people commit before Converſion, and not for any ſins that they commit after they have believed in him; for when they are once become Believers, they are in no ſenſe under the Law, and therefore cannot ſin at all.—Certainly, then, If we were to embrace this vile Notion, we muſt lower the Worth of the Goſpel, as well as the Authority of the Law, to an unſpeakable degree; for our ſins being ſo much the leſs, we muſt conſider ourſelves as immenſely leſs indebted to divine Grace for the Pardon of Sin, than we formerly conceived, while we ſuppoſed the Law of God to be a ſtanding Rule of Action all our Life long.

If it ſhould be pleaded, That the Intereſts of Holineſs may be ſecured, though the Law of God be denied to be the Believer's Rule, becauſe the Influence of the Holy Spirit will lead him to thoſe Actions which will glorify God, though he is not *bound* to them by any written *Law*; I muſt reply that moſt of the former Conſequences would remain unobviated by this Evaſion. For ſtill it is implied, that the Believer is never bound to love or obey God more than he does; ſeeing he always performs all *that* to which the Holy Spirit *effectually influences* him; and *more* than *that*, it is ſuppoſed, it was not his duty to do. So that ſtill cauſe of repentance is excluded. Right and Wrong are confounded. Pardoning Mercy is leſſened. Nor has the Believer any rule to judge by, which of his actions are

from

from the Spirit and which not; for none are criminal. Surely to make either GOD'S DECREES, or the SPIRIT'S INFLUENCES, or our OWN INCLINATIONS the *measure of our Duty*, is unspeakably absurd and dangerous. It is most readily granted that the Influences of the Spirit is absolutely needful to incline us to *our Duty*, but it is not necessary to constitute *Duty*. Nor can any thing tend much more to the dishonour of the Holy Spirit, than to entertain so unscriptural an Opinion.

May the blessed Spirit lead our Minds into a thorough Acquaintance with the Promises of God, and deeply inscribe his Law upon our hearts.

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